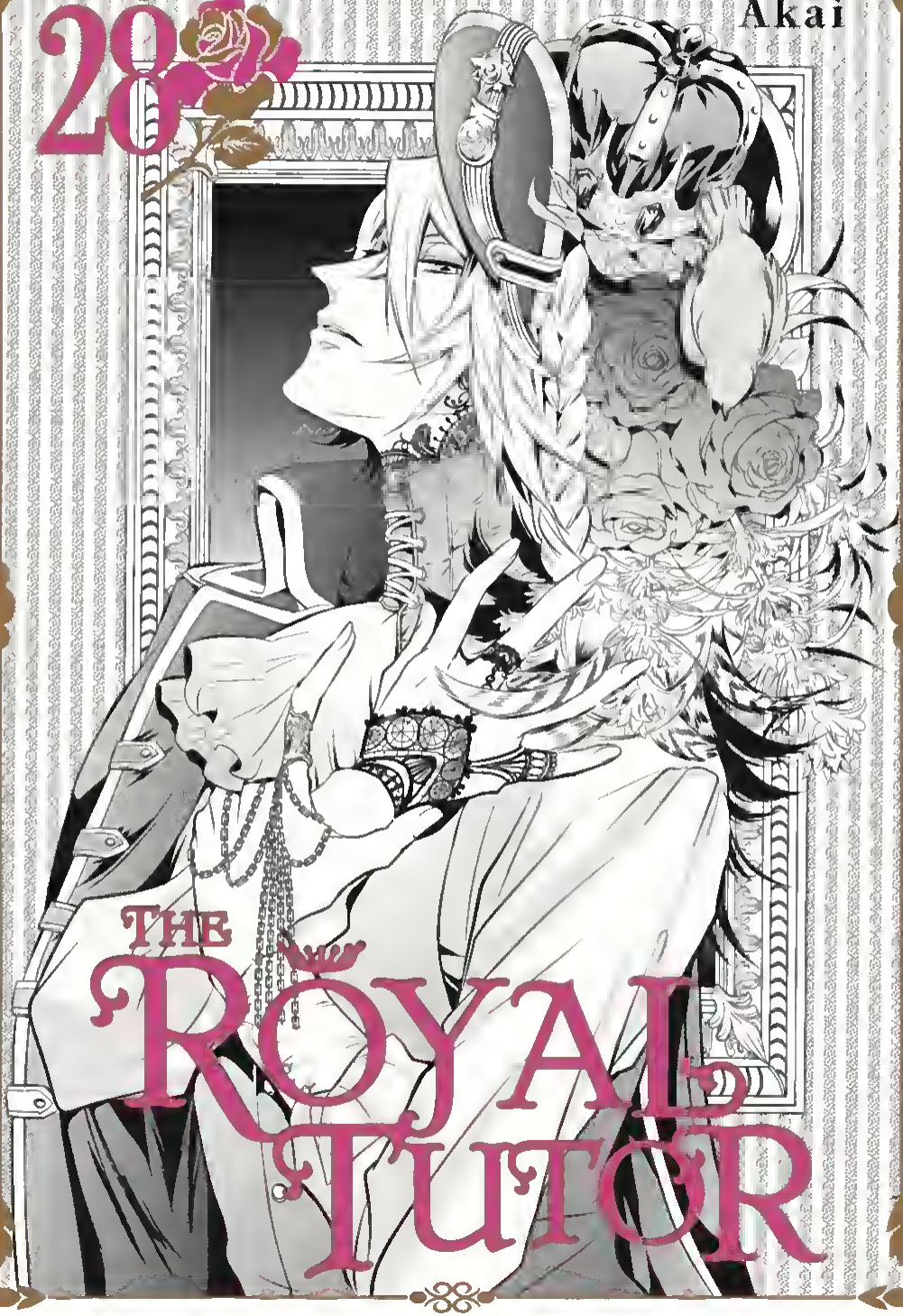
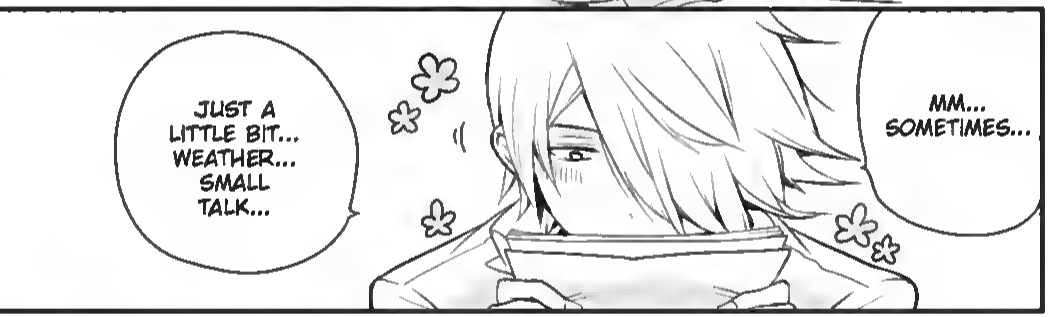
Chapter 28

Higasa Akai

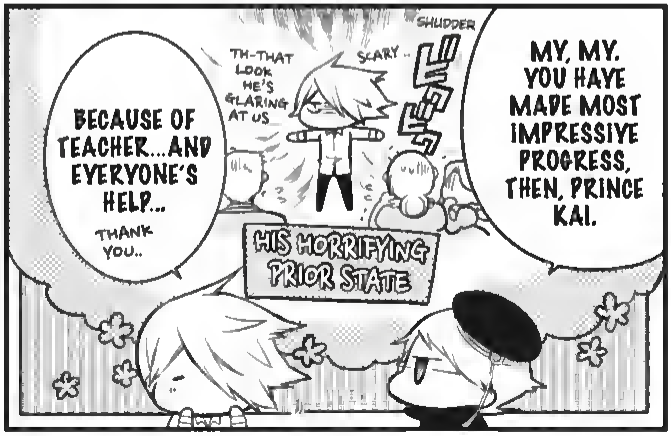


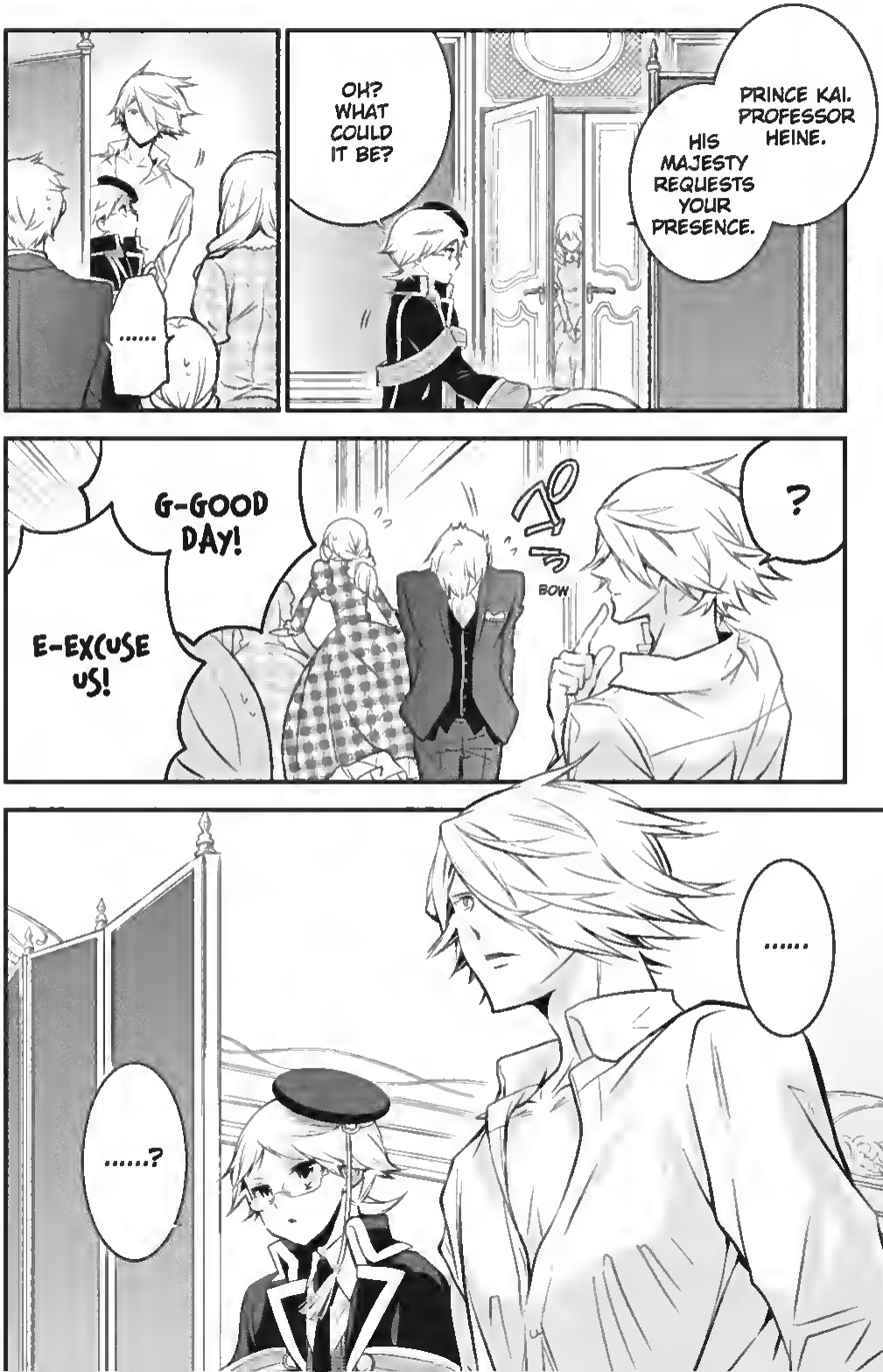
THE ROYAL TUTOR

THAT IS ALL FOR YOUR LESSONS TODAY. WELL DONE.
...MM.
AH, YES.
HAVE YOU BEEN STRIKING UP CONVERSATIONS WITH THE PALACE STAFF RECENTLY?


MM... SOMETIMES...
JUST A LITTLE BIT... WEATHER... SMALL TALK...

PARDON ME.
コンコン
KNOCK KNOCK

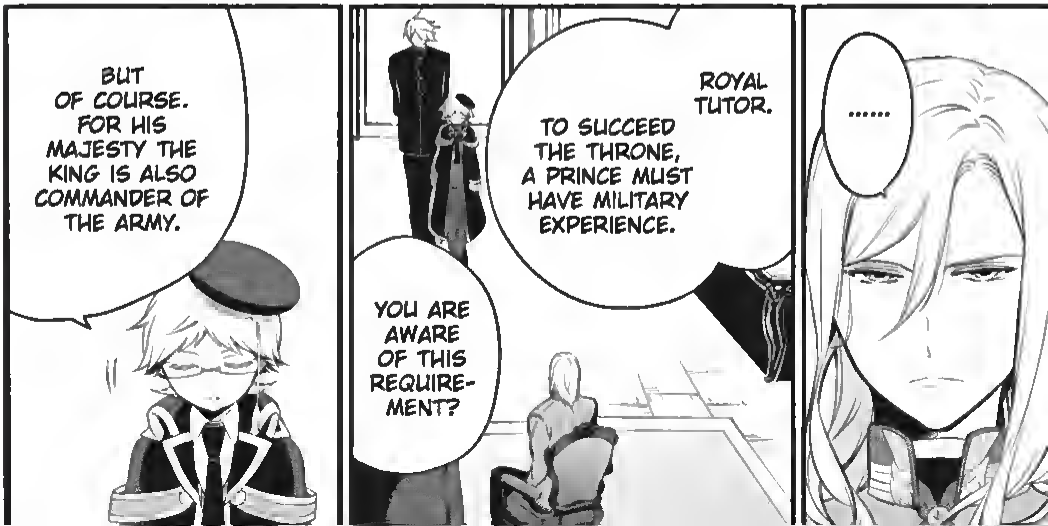

MY, MY. YOU HAVE MADE MOST IMPRESSIVE PROGRESS, THEN, PRINCE KAI.
SHUDDER
ヒエッ
SCARY...
TH-THAT LOOK HE'S GLARING AT US
BECAUSE OF TEACHER...AND EVERYONE'S HELP...
THANK YOU..
HIS HORRIFYING PRIOR STATE


.....
OH? WHAT COULD IT BE?
PRINCE KAI. PROFESSOR HEINE. HIS MAJESTY REQUESTS YOUR PRESENCE.
G-GOOD DAY!
E-EXCUSE US!
ペコ
BOW
?
.....
.....?

Chapter 28

The Price of the Past

MASTER...
KAI...


BUT OF COURSE. FOR HIS MAJESTY THE KING IS ALSO COMMANDER OF THE ARMY.
YOU ARE AWARE OF THIS REQUIRE-MENT?
TO SUCCEED THE THRONE, A PRINCE MUST HAVE MILITARY EXPERIENCE.
ROYAL TUTOR.
.....

?
.....
IT IS TIME YOU KNEW OF IT.
...UNTIL A PARTICULAR INCIDENT ONE YEAR AGO.
...IT WAS CUSTOMARY FOR GRANZREICH'S PRINCES TO ATTEND MILITARY ACADEMY BEGINNING AT THE AGE OF FIFTEEN...
IN ADDITION TO SCHOOLING BY A ROYAL TUTOR...
THIS TABLOID WAS RELEASED THIS MORNING.
"A TABOO TOPIC KEPT SUPPRESSED BY THE ROYAL FAMILY...
"THE TRUTH ABOUT THE SECOND PRINCE'S VIOLENT RAMPAGE—"

"ONE YEAR AGO, WHEN PRINCES KAI AND BRUNO WERE STILL ATTENDING MILITARY ACADEMY...
"...THE PRINCES USED THEIR POSITIONS AS ROYALS TO KEEP THE WHOLE SCHOOL UNDER THEIR THUMBS.
"OUR SOURCES SAY THAT THEY VICIOUSLY BEAT ANYONE WHO DEFIED THEM.
"THEY THREATENED EVEN THE INSTRUCTORS, FORCING THEIR TEACHERS TO GIVE THEM TOP MARKS DESPITE NEVER ATTENDING THEIR LESSONS OR TRAINING EXERCISES.

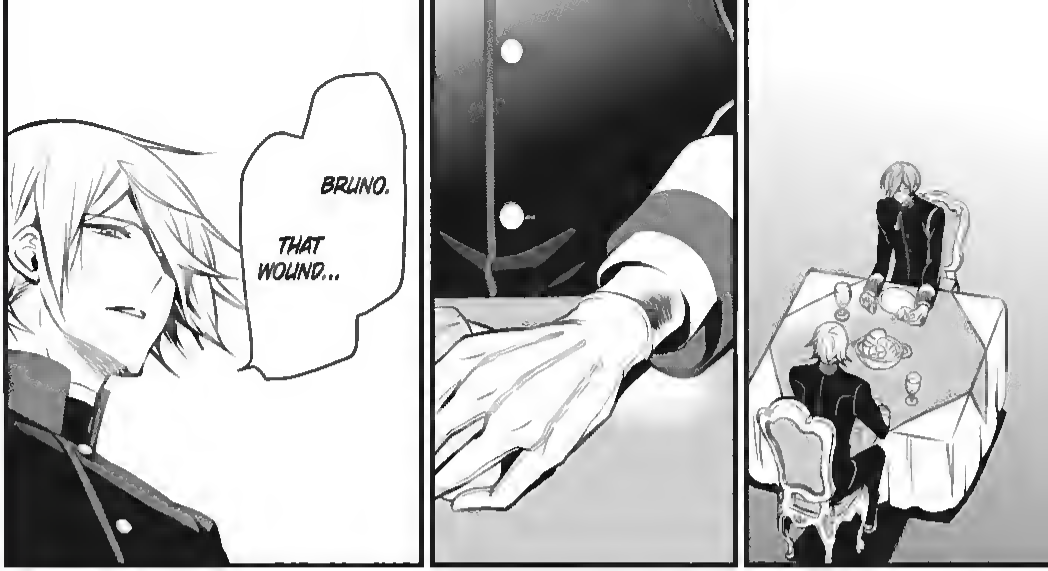
"THIS IS THE INCIDENT THAT BROUGHT HIS VIOLENT TEMPER INTO THE PUBLIC EYE.
"PRINCE KAI WAS RESTRAINED AT THE SCENE.
"BUT THE NIGHTMARE FINALLY CAME TO AN END AFTER ONE 'STUDENT R' WAS FOUND WITH SERIOUS INJURIES.
"YET TO THIS DAY, THE REST OF THE PRINCES' TRANSGRESSIONS REMAIN A WELL-KEPT SECRET.
"HE CONTINUES TO SUFFER UNDER PRESSURE FROM THE STATE."
"...BUT STUDENT R, THE VICTIM, WAS PUNISHED WITH EXPULSION.
"HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR THIS FIGHT ALONE, PRINCE KAI WAS SUSPENDED FROM THE ACADEMY, AND PRINCE BRUNO TOOK A LEAVE OF ABSENCE...

IT WAS THE MOST PREVALENT STORY I UNCOVERED DURING MY RESEARCH BEFORE I ARRIVED AT THE PALACE.
YET UPON MEETING THE PRINCE, IT SEEMED SO UNLIKE HIM THAT I DISMISSED IT AS NOTHING BUT A RUMOR.
.....
THE FIGHT PRINCE KAI WAS INVOLVED IN...
MASTER.
THAT ARTICLE IS COMPLETE NONSENSE.
I-I UNDER-STAND THAT... BUT STILL...
IT IS OUR DUTY TO PROTECT THAT RIGHT, NO MATTER WHAT THEY CHOOSE TO BELIEVE.
OUR PEOPLE HAVE THE RIGHT TO FREE SPEECH.
... BUT ...
THE VERY IDEA...IF I COULD CRUSH THE ENTIRE NEWSPAPER COMPANY...

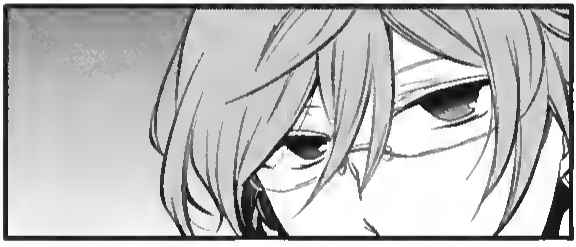
...THE PART ABOUT ME HURTING SOMEONE...
...IS TRUE...
GRAB
.....
YOU DID IT FOR MY SAKE!
PLEASE... DON'T— DON'T SPEAK LIKE THAT!
.....!
KAI!

...MAY I ASK...
...FOR YOUR HIGHNESS'S SIDE OF THE STORY?
.....
...I WAS A SECOND-YEAR STUDENT BACK THEN.
BECAUSE OF MY SCARY EXPRESSION... NO ONE APPROACHED ME...
IT WAS LONELY... BUT UN-EVENTFUL...

...UNTIL SHORTLY AFTER BRUNO JOINED THE ACADEMY...
BROTHER, THE CARRIAGE IS WAITING.
LET US DEPART.
WHAT'S WRONG...?
IT'S... NOTHING. JUST A LITTLE SCRAPE I INCURRED DURING SPARRING PRACTICE.
MY OPPONENT'S SWORD WAS THRUST WITH SUCH FORCE...
YOU'RE ALREADY DOING REALISTIC COMBAT TRAINING?
AH, NO. IT WAS MERELY A FLUKE.
HE APOLOGIZED TO ME, IN ANY CASE.
.....


BRUNO.
THAT WOUND...

NO, NO, DO NOT MISINTERPRET. MY OWN LACKLUSTER SWORDSMANSHIP WAS THE CAUSE...
WITH THE SAME PERSON AS BEFORE?
AH, THIS...
...HAPPENED DURING TRAINING.



...BRUNO...
...ARE YOU HAVING... PROBLEMS?

NONE WHATSOEVER.
YOU WORRY FAR TOO MUCH, BROTHER.
CLINK
カチャ

BRUNO'S LATE... WHAT'S KEEPING HIM?
HE'S USUALLY THE ONE WAITING AT THE CARRIAGE FIRST.
THIS HAPPENED SEVERAL MORE TIMES, UNTIL ONE EVENING...

HOW LONG IS HE GOING TO BABYSIT THE PRINCE?
HE SAYS IT'S STILL NOT ENOUGH.
AH-HA-HA-HA! SERI-OUSLY?

CREAK
THE TRAINING HALL...
IS HE STILL PRACTIC-ING...?

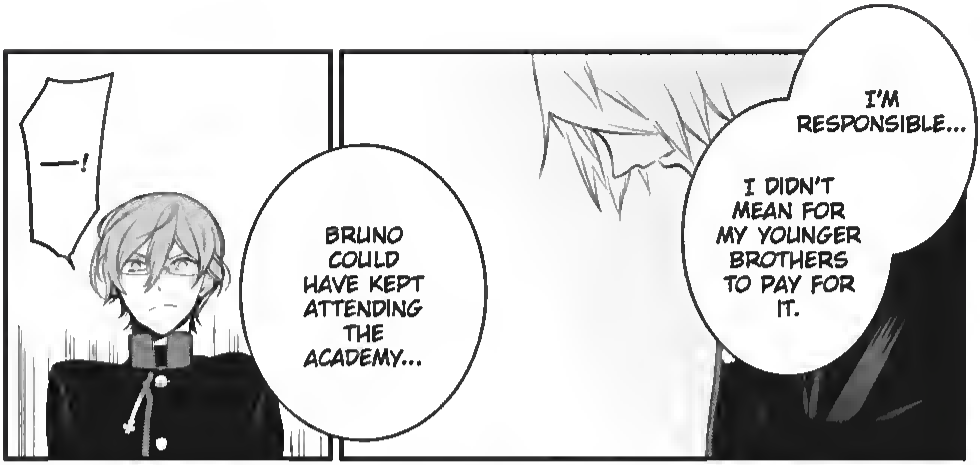
WHAM
GET UP... YOU STILL NEED MORE TRAINING, DON'T YOU?
YOU'RE JUST A SOFT ROYAL...BUT I'LL TOUGHEN YOU UP!
G...
GNH...
KOFF!

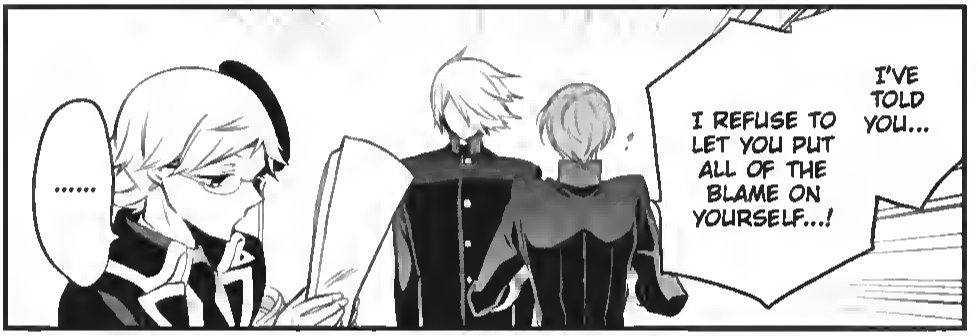
DON'T YOU DARE...
...HURT BRUNO!!
SNAP

WHOOM
WHACK
—KH!
—YOU...
...BAS-
TARD!!

YANK
!!
GAH!
STOP, KAI... PLEASE...
IF YOU DON'T STOP... YOU'LL...
BASH
GAH!
YOU...!
WHUD
BASH

KAI!!
...BOTH I AND THE OTHER BOY WERE SERIOUSLY INJURED.
THE ACADEMY LAID THE INCIDENT TO REST BY EXPELLING HIM AND SUSPENDING ME...
LEONHARD AND LICHT WERE SUPPOSED TO START AT THE ACADEMY THE NEXT YEAR... BUT IT'S BEEN PUT OFF...

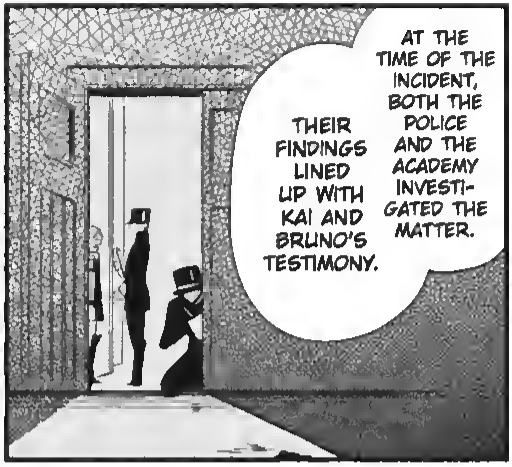

—!
BRUNO COULD HAVE KEPT ATTENDING THE ACADEMY...
I'M RESPONSIBLE...
I DIDN'T MEAN FOR MY YOUNGER BROTHERS TO PAY FOR IT.

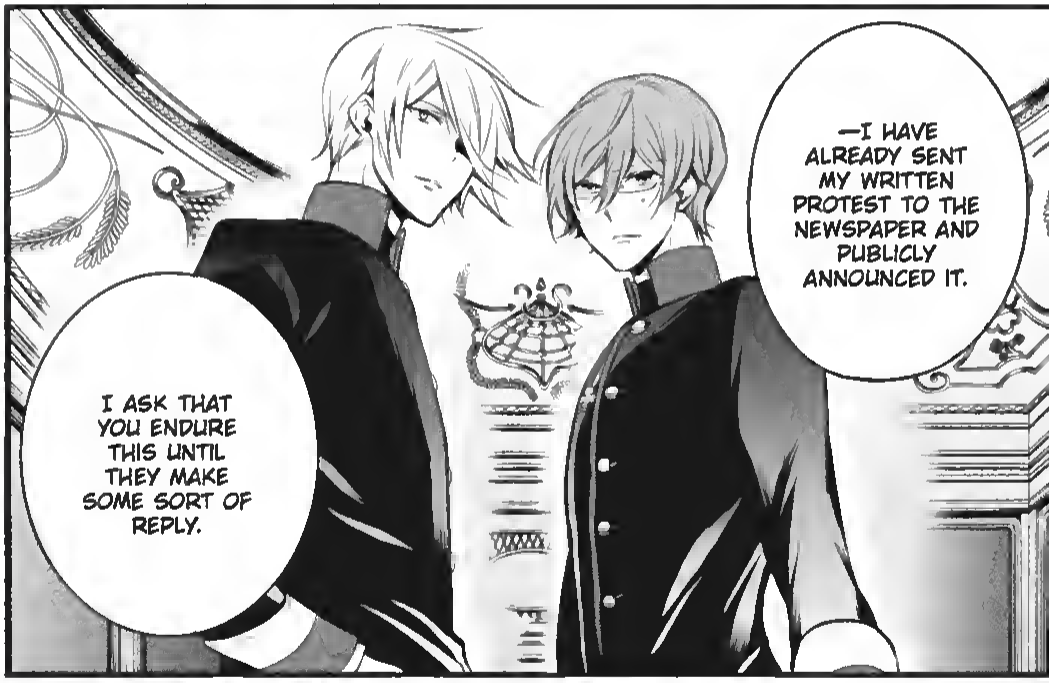

.....
I REFUSE TO LET YOU PUT ALL OF THE BLAME ON YOURSELF...!
I'VE TOLD YOU...

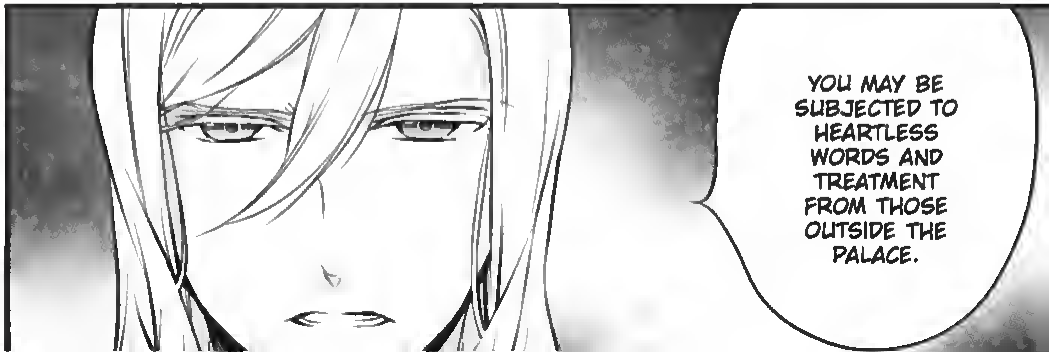
THEREIN LIES THE PROBLEM.
IF THE "STUDENT R" IN THIS ARTICLE IS THE SAME BOY, I DARESAY THE ONLY PART THAT HOLDS TRUE IS THAT HE WAS INJURED.
THIS HARDLY LINES UP WITH THE STORY THIS PERIODICAL WOULD HAVE ONE BELIEVE.

I SEE...THIS IS THE INCIDENT THAT SO STRENGTHENED THEIR BOND— THE BOND I OBSERVED WHEN PRINCE KAI COLLAPSED.

I WILL NOT STIFLE THE RIGHT TO FREE SPEECH...
...BUT MISTAKES MUST BE CORRECTED.

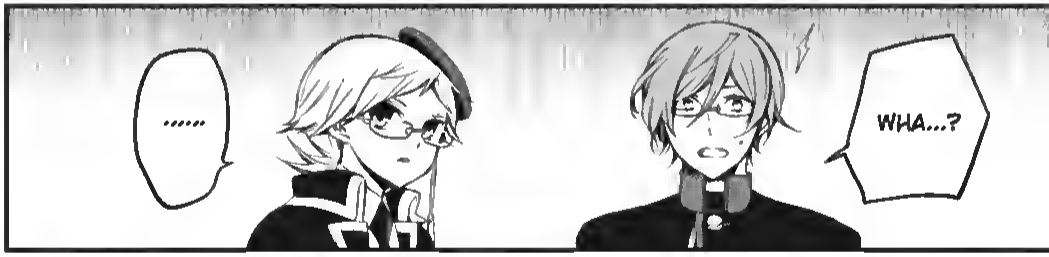

AT THE TIME OF THE INCIDENT, BOTH THE POLICE AND THE ACADEMY INVESTIGATED THE MATTER.
THEIR FINDINGS LINED UP WITH KAI AND BRUNO'S TESTIMONY.

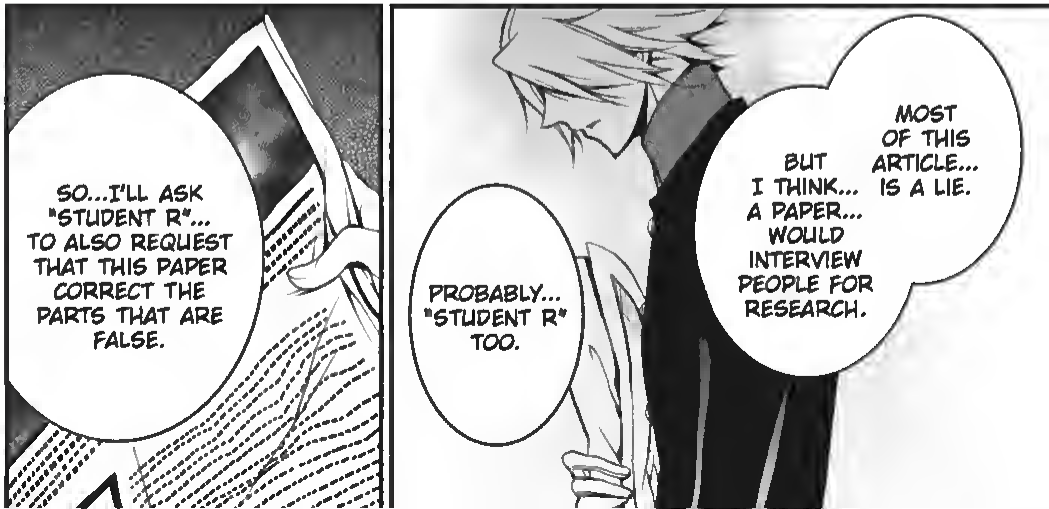

—I HAVE ALREADY SENT MY WRITTEN PROTEST TO THE NEWSPAPER AND PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED IT.
I ASK THAT YOU ENDURE THIS UNTIL THEY MAKE SOME SORT OF REPLY.


YOU MAY BE SUBJECTED TO HEARTLESS WORDS AND TREATMENT FROM THOSE OUTSIDE THE PALACE.

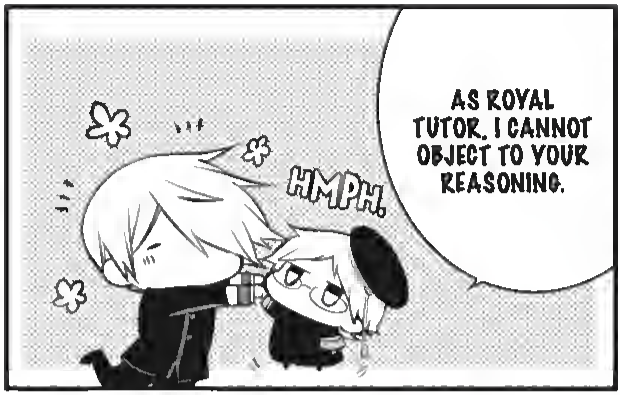
ROYAL TUTOR... LOOK AFTER THESE TWO FOR ME.
YOUR MAJESTY.
.....
...UNDERSTOOD.
.....
KCHAK
.....
CONFOUND IT...THEY WROTE NAUGHT BUT UTTER NONSENSE...
AND WE CAN DO NOTHING!
...BRUNO, DO YOU KNOW... WHERE "STUDENT R" LIVES?
HUH...? WELL, ONLY NOBLES ATTEND THAT MILITARY ACADEMY.
I AM SURE WE COULD FIND OUT...

...I'LL SPEAK WITH "STUDENT R."


.....
WHA...?


SO...I'LL ASK "STUDENT R"... TO ALSO REQUEST THAT THIS PAPER CORRECT THE PARTS THAT ARE FALSE.
PROBABLY... "STUDENT R" TOO.
BUT I THINK... A PAPER... WOULD INTERVIEW PEOPLE FOR RESEARCH.
MOST OF THIS ARTICLE... IS A LIE.

JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS...IS WRONG.
KNOWING WHAT HE DID...HE IS CERTAINLY NOT THE KIND OF PERSON WHO WOULD SO EASILY CONCEDE!
WHY, HE IS MORE THAN LIKELY THE ONE BEHIND ALL OF THIS HOGWASH!
HE WAS OFFICIALLY PUNISHED...
...BUT I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW WHY HE HURT YOU.
...NH!
I NEED TO BE ABLE TO TALK WITH ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE...
...IF I WANT TO BE A CANDIDATE FOR THE THRONE...
BUT FATHER SAID TO WAIT...
TEACHER, WHAT DO YOU THINK?


AS ROYAL TUTOR, I CANNOT OBJECT TO YOUR REASONING.
HMPH.

.....

HOWEVER, PRINCE KAI, I AM CONCERNED FOR YOU.

IT'S OKAY.
I WON'T RAISE A HAND AGAINST HIM.
.....

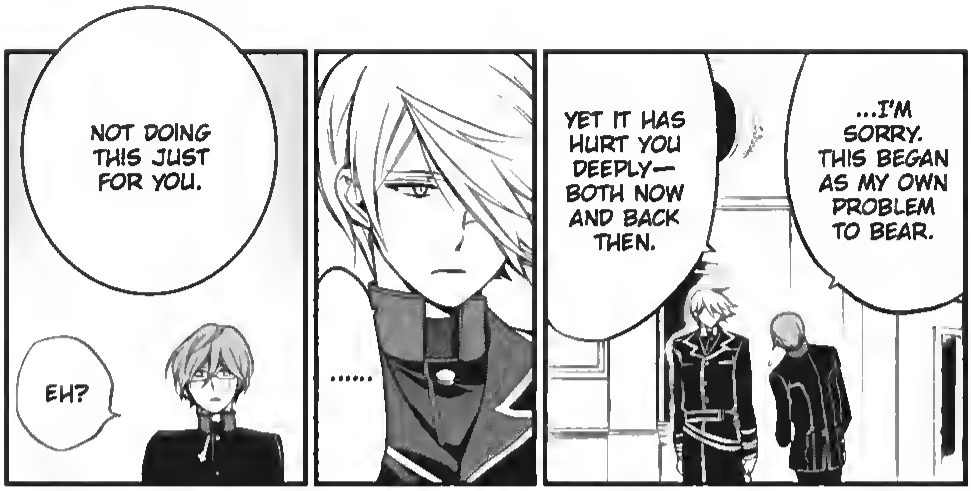
THIS "R" MAY ATTACK YOU ONCE MORE, WHETHER PHYSICALLY OR WITH HURTFUL WORDS.
COULD YOU BEAR THAT?

.....

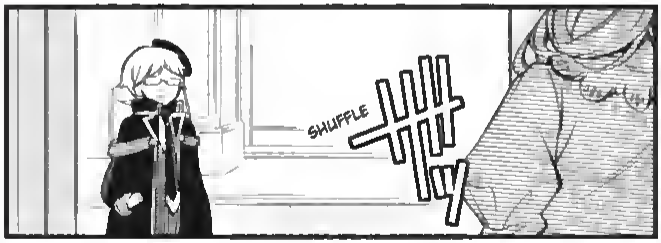
...VERY WELL, THEN.
I SHALL ACCOMPANY YOU AS A MEDIATOR.
FLAP
TEACHER ...
I WILL SPEAK TO THE KING MYSELF AND ASK HIS PERMISSION TO LEAVE THE PALACE.
AN ESCORT...
BUT IT IS UNSAFE FOR THE TWO OF YOU TO GO ALONE.
YOU SHOULD TAKE ALONG AN ESCORT, JUST IN CASE.
.....
!
AS YOUR HIGHNESS WAS HIS FIRST TARGET, YOUR PRESENCE COULD MAKE A CONFRONTATION MORE VOLATILE.
PRINCE BRUNO, PLEASE WAIT HERE.

PLEASE, YOUR HIGHNESS, ENTRUST YOUR SAFETY TO US!
WE'RE HERE TO DEFEND YOU, PRINCE KAI!
SWIP
.....
NGAH!
WOT!?
STAB
...WHO ARE YOU?

THEY WERE KIND ENOUGH TO PROVIDE US WITH AN ESCORT ON OUR EXCURSIONS INTO TOWN AND TO THE ZOO.
THEY HAVE ALWAYS BEEN LOOKING AFTER US IN THE BACK-GROUND.
AND TACKLED YOUR HIGHNESS, THINKING YOU WERE AN INTRUDER...
FLUFF
FLUFF
STOP!!
THEY ARE THE GUARDS WHO MISTOOK ME FOR A CHILD ON THE DAY OF MY ARRIVAL...
SHOCK
OH, DEAR.
I REMEMBER... NOTHING.
SORRY...
I DON'T REMEMBER EVER BECOMING YOUR MENTOR! DON'T MAKE US OUT TO BE A PAIR!
I'M THE STUDENT; HE'S THE MENTOR.
.....
MY, MY.
AND I'M MAXIMILIAN!
FWIP
TH-THEN I SHALL INTRODUCE MYSELF...I AM LUDWIG STEINER!


NOT DOING THIS JUST FOR YOU.
EH?
.....
YET IT HAS HURT YOU DEEPLY— BOTH NOW AND BACK THEN.
...I'M SORRY. THIS BEGAN AS MY OWN PROBLEM TO BEAR.

IF THEY STARTED AVOIDING ME AGAIN BECAUSE OF THAT ARTICLE... I'D BE SAD...
I'VE... FINALLY STARTED TO MAKE FRIENDS WITH THE PALACE STAFF.


SHUFFLE

PRINCE KAI!

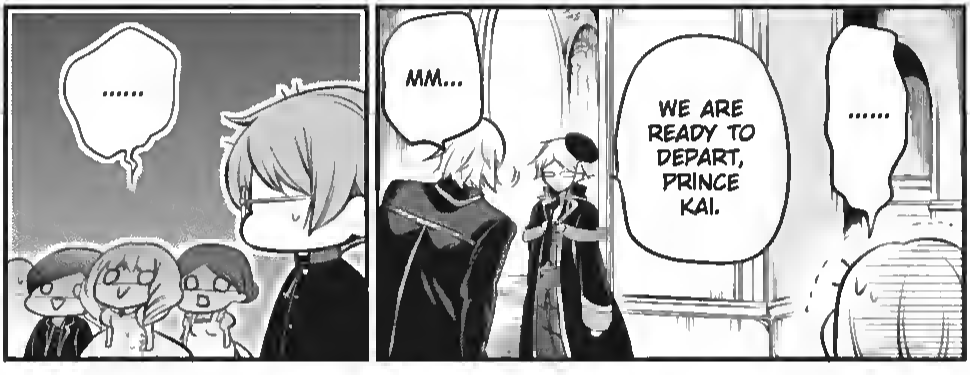
THAT'S ANOTHER REASON...I HAVE TO...
KAI...

PRINCE KAI!
WE BELIEVE IN YOU, PRINCE KAI...!!
WE KNOW THAT YOUR HIGHNESS HAS A TRULY GENTLE SOUL.
NO MATTER WHAT ANYONE SAYS, THOSE OF US WHO SERVE BY YOUR HIGHNESS'S SIDE WILL KEEP STANDING WITH YOU.
SO PLEASE, UM...

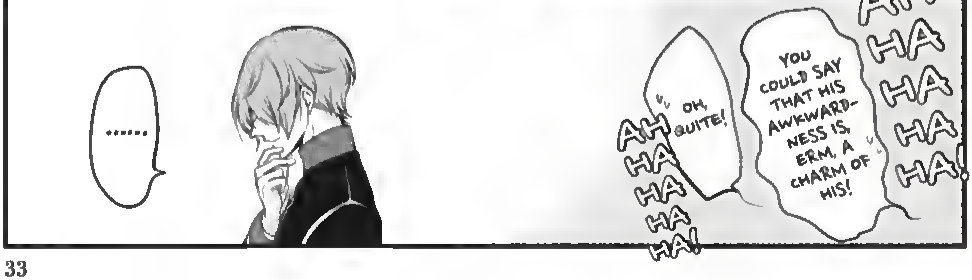
PLEASE DON'T LOSE HEART ...!

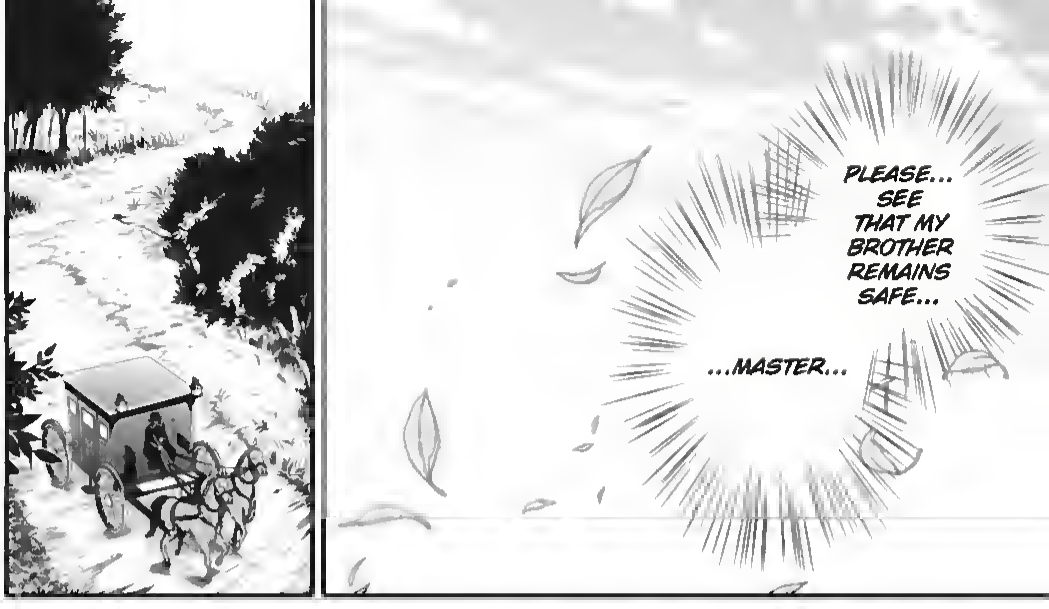
THANK YOU...
SNEER
ふ

!!!!


.....
MM...
WE ARE READY TO DEPART, PRINCE KAI.
.....

Y-YES, OF COURSE!
PLEASE DO NOT MISUNDERSTAND HIM...
...I BELIEVE THAT, FOR MY BROTHER, THAT WAS A "SMILE FROM EAR TO EAR."


.....
OH, QUITE!
AHHAHAHAHA!
YOU COULD SAY THAT HIS AWKWARDNESS IS, ERM, A CHARM OF HIS!
AHHAHAHAHA!


PLEASE... SEE THAT MY BROTHER REMAINS SAFE...
...MASTER...

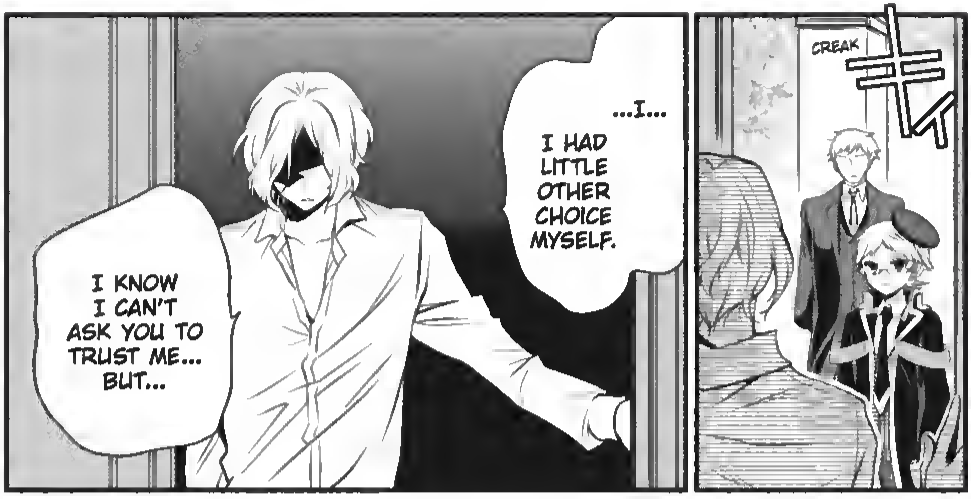
WOOOW!

THAT IS ONE RIDICULOUSLY HUGE HOUSE!
THIS IS THE MANOR OF "STUDENT R"...
THAT IS, ONE RALF VON FUCHS.

MM...
I ASK THAT YOU WAIT INSIDE THE CARRIAGE FOR THE TIME BEING.
IT IS POSSIBLE THAT HE HARBORS A GRUDGE TOWARD YOUR HIGHNESS.
LUDWIG AND I WILL GO ALONE...
...TO NEGOTIATE A PLACE TO SPEAK WITH HIM.
HERR FUCHS, ARE YOU THERE?
KNOCK KNOCK
WHO ARE YOU?
.....
CREAK

A CHILD ...?
CLAMP
むぐぐ
I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW, I AM A FULL-GROWN—
P-PERHAPS IT WOULD BE BEST TO SAVE THAT FOR LATER...
FLUME
むぉ
FLUME
むぉ
FLINCH
ビクッ
WE ARE ENVOYS FROM THE PALACE.
...I AM.
I APOLO-GIZE FOR CALLING SO SUD-DENLY. ARE YOU RALF VON FUCHS?

PRINCE KAI IS HERE TO SPEAK WITH YOU IN PERSON.
I-I'M BUSY RIGHT NOW. GOOD-BYE.
.....!
.....!
IF YOU MIGHT DIVULGE YOUR OWN REASONS FOR RAISING YOUR HAND AGAINST PRINCE BRUNO...
PRINCE KAI EXPRESSES REMORSE FOR HIS ACTIONS AS WELL.
WE WISH TO THE INCIDENT, WITH CLEAR HEADS.
WE ARE NOT HERE TO ACCOST YOU.


I KNOW I CAN'T ASK YOU TO TRUST ME... BUT...
...I... I HAD LITTLE OTHER CHOICE MYSELF.
CREAK

...IF PRINCE KAI IS HERE, I WANT YOU TO LET ME MEET WITH HIM.
I WANT TO TELL HIM EVERYTHING... AND APOLOGIZE IN PERSON.

AS YOU WISH.
PRINCE KAI SHOULD BE PRESENT FOR THE REST OF THIS DISCUSSION, THEN.
.....
I WILL GO FETCH HIS HIGHNESS.
...HUH. I'D HEARD THAT THIS FELLOW WAS A NO-GOOD HOODLUM WHO TORMENTED PRINCE BRUNO.
BUT IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S ALREADY MENDED HIS WAYS.
IT'S A GOOD THING I DIDN'T NEED THIS AFTER ALL...

!!!
WHIRL

HUUUH? NOW WHERE DID MY MENTOR MEANDER OFF TO?
YOUR FRIEND? I LET HIM INSIDE ALREADY.
OH, ALL RIGHT.
.....
...GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN...
...PRINCE KAI.
...MMN.
NOD

PLEASE ...
...COME IN.
♦ To be continued in the next chapter of The Royal Tutor ♦

The Royal Tutor Chapter 28

Higasa Akai

Translation: Amanda Haley • Lettering: Abigail Blackman

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